CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Previously Presented) A preparation process for a first aqueous dispersion comprising an *ex-situ* photosensitive silver halide and a substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an organic carboxylic acid, comprising the steps of: separately preparing a second aqueous dispersion comprising said ex-situ photosensitive silver halide and a third aqueous dispersion comprising said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an organic carboxylic acid; and mixing said second aqueous dispersion with said third aqueous dispersion to produce a mixture thereof, wherein said first aqueous dispersion thereby produced is substantially free of a water-soluble metal or ammonium salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms and said process further comprises a step selected from the group consisting of: increasing the pH of said second aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 prior to mixing with said third aqueous dispersion; increasing the pH of said third aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 prior to mixing with said second aqueous dispersion; and increasing the pH of said mixture to a value of at least 8.0.

2. (Previously Presented) Preparation process according to claim 1, wherein said third aqueous dispersion further comprises a first in situ photosensitive silver halide.

3. (Previously Presented) Preparation process according to claim 1, wherein said pH value of at least 8.0 is attained by addition of ammonia.

4. (Previously Presented) Preparation process according to claim 1, wherein said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an organic carboxylic acid is a silver salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid greater than 12 carbon atoms.

5. (Currently Amended) A first aqueous dispersion comprising an ex-situ photosensitive silver halide and a substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms and having a pH at or above 8.0 obtained by a process comprising the steps of: separately preparing a second aqueous dispersion comprising said ex-situ photosensitive silver halide and a third aqueous dispersion comprising said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an organic carboxylic acid; and

mixing said second aqueous dispersion with said third aqueous dispersion to produce a mixture thereof, wherein said first aqueous dispersion thereby produced is substantially free of a water-soluble metal or ammonium salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms and said process further comprises a step selected from the group consisting of: increasing the pH of said second aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 prior to mixing with said third aqueous dispersion; increasing the pH of said third aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 prior to mixing with said second aqueous dispersion; and increasing the pH of said mixture to a value of at least 8.0.

6. (Previously Presented) First aqueous dispersion according to claim 5, wherein said first aqueous dispersion further contains a reducing agent for said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms.

7. (Previously Presented) A process for preparing a layer of a photo-addressable thermally developable element of a photothermographic recording material, said photo-addressable thermally developable element comprising photosensitive silver halide, a substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms, a reducing agent therefor in thermal working relationship therewith and a binder, comprising the steps of: (i) preparing a first aqueous dispersion comprising an ex-situ photosensitive silver halide and a substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms, comprising the steps of: separately preparing a second aqueous dispersion comprising said ex-situ photosensitive silver halide and third aqueous dispersion comprising said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an organic carboxylic acid; and mixing said second aqueous dispersion with said third aqueous dispersion to produce a mixture thereof, wherein said first aqueous dispersion thereby produced is substantially free of a water-soluble metal or ammonium salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms and said process further comprises a step selected from the group consisting of: increasing the pH of said second aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 prior to mixing with said third aqueous dispersion; increasing the pH of said third aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 prior to mixing with said second aqueous dispersion; and increasing the pH of said mixture to a value of at least 8.0; and (ii) coating said first aqueous dispersion on a support.

8. (Previously Presented) A preparation process for a fourth aqueous dispersion comprising a second in-situ photosensitive silver halide and a substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms, comprising the steps of: (i) providing a third aqueous dispersion comprising said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms and (ii) partially converting said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms in said third aqueous dispersion with a non-fluoro halide ion source into said second in-situ photosensitive silver halide thereby producing said fourth aqueous dispersion; wherein said fourth aqueous dispersion thereby produced is substantially free of a water-soluble metal or ammonium salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms and said process further comprises a step selected from the group consisting of: increasing the pH of said third aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 prior to step (ii); increasing the pH of the third aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 during step (ii); and increasing the pH of said aqueous dispersion resulting from step (ii) to a value of at least 8.0.

9. (Previously Presented) Preparation process according to claim 8, wherein said pH value of at least 8.0 is attained by addition of ammonia.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Currently Amended) A fourth aqueous dispersion comprising a second in-situ photosensitive silver halide and a substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms and having a pH at or above 8.0 obtained by a process comprising the steps of: (i) providing a third aqueous dispersion comprising said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms and (ii) partially converting said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms in said third aqueous dispersion with a non-fluoro halide ion source into said second in-situ photosensitive silver halide thereby producing said fourth aqueous dispersion; wherein said fourth aqueous dispersion thereby produced is substantially free of a water-soluble metal or ammonium salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms and said process further

comprises a step selected from the group consisting of: increasing the pH of said third aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 prior to step (ii); increasing the pH of the third aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 during step (ii); and increasing the pH of said aqueous dispersion resulting from step (ii) to a value of at least 8.0.

12. (Previously Presented) Fourth aqueous dispersion according to claim 11, wherein said fourth aqueous dispersion further contains a reducing agent for said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms.

13. (Previously Presented) A process for preparing a layer of a photo-addressable thermally developable element of a photothermographic recording material, said photo-addressable thermally developable element comprising photosensitive silver halide, a substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms, a reducing agent therefor in thermal working relationship therewith and a binder, comprising the steps of: (i) preparing a fourth aqueous dispersion comprising a second in-situ photosensitive silver halide and a substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms, comprising the steps of: (I) providing a third aqueous dispersion comprising said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms and (II) partially converting said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms in said third aqueous dispersion with a non-fluoro halide ion source into said second in-situ photosensitive silver halide thereby producing said fourth aqueous dispersion; wherein said fourth aqueoud dispersion thereby produced is substantially free of a water-solube metal or ammonium salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms and said process further comprises a step selected from the group consisting of: increasing the pH of said third aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 prior to step (II); increasing the pH of third aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 during step (II); and increasing the pH of said aqueous dispersion resulting from step (II) to a value of at least 8.0; and (ii) coating said fourth aqueous dispersion on a support.

14. (Currently Amended) A photothermographic recording material comprising a photo-addressable thermally developable element, wherein the photo-addressable thermally developable element comprises a layer produced with a first dispersion, wherein the first aqueous dispersion comprises an ex-situ photosensitive silver halide and a substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms, and wherein the first aqueous dispersion has a pH at or above 8.0 and is obtained by a preparation process for a first aqueous dispersion comprising the steps of: separately preparing a second aqueous dispersion comprising said ex-situ photosensitive silver halide and a third aqueous dispersion comprising said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms; and mixing said second aqueous dispersion with said third aqueous dispersion to produce a mixture thereof, wherein said first aqueous dispersion thereby produced is substantially free of a water-soluble metal or ammonium salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms and said process further comprises a step selected from the group consisting of: increasing the pH of said second aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 prior to mixing with said third aqueous dispersion; increasing the pH of said third aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 prior to mixing with said second aqueous dispersion; and increasing the pH of said mixture to a value of at least 8.0.

15. (Currently Amended) A photothermographic recording material comprising a photo-addressable thermally developable element, wherein the photo-addressable thermally developable element comprises a layer produced with a fourth aqueous dispersion, wherein said fourth aqueous dispersion comprises a second in-situ photosensitive silver halide and a substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms and wherein the fourth aqueous dispersion has a pH at or above 8.0 and is obtained by a preparation process comprising the steps of: (i) providing a third aqueous dispersion comprising said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms and (ii) partially converting said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms in said third aqueous dispersion with a non-fluoro halide ion source into said second in-situ photosensitive silver halide thereby producing said fourth aqueous dispersion; wherein said fourth aqueous dispersion thereby produced is substantially free of a water-soluble metal or

ammonium salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms and said process further comprises a step selected from the group consisting of: increasing the pH of said third aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 prior to step (ii); increasing the pH of the third aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 during step (ii); and increasing the pH of said aqueous dispersion resulting from step (ii) to a value of at least 8.0, wherein said process further includes a step of adding a water-soluble silver salt having a solubility in water at 20°C of greater than 0.1 g/L at any stage in said preparation process.

16. (Currently Amended) A photothermographic recording material comprising a photo-addressable thermally developable element, wherein the photo-addressable thermally developable element comprises a layer produced with a first aqueous dispersion, wherein the first aqueous dispersion comprises an ex-situ photosensitive silver halide and a substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms, and wherein the first aqueous dispersion has a pH at or above 8.0 and is obtained by a preparation process for a first aqueous dispersion comprising the steps of: separately preparing a second aqueous dispersion comprising said ex-situ photosensitive silver halide and a third aqueous dispersion comprising said substantially light-insensitive silver salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms; and mixing said second aqueous dispersion with said third aqueous dispersion to produce a mixture thereof, wherein said first aqueous dispersion thereby produced is substantially free of a water-soluble metal or ammonium salt of an aliphatic carboxylic acid with greater than 12 carbon atoms and said process further comprises a step selected from the group consisting of: increasing the pH of said second aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 prior to mixing with said third aqueous dispersion; increasing the pH of said third aqueous dispersion to a value of at least 8.0 prior to mixing with said second aqueous dispersion; and increasing the pH of said mixture to a value of at least 8.0, wherein said process further includes a step of adding a water-soluble silver salt having a solubility in water at 20°C of greater than 0.1 g/L at any stage in said preparation process.

17. (Previously Presented) Preparation process according to claim 1, wherein said process further includes a step of adding a water-soluble silver salt having a solubility in water at 20°C of greater than 0.1 g/L at any stage in said preparation process.

18. (Previously Presented) Preparation process according to claim 8, wherein said process further includes a step of adding a water-soluble silver salt having a solubility in water at 20°C of greater than 0.1 g/L at any stage in said preparation process.